



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTANA ECONOMY STABLE IN JANUARY

HELENA, Mont. --- Montana's economy experienced little change from December to January, continuing its solid performance from the previous year. The seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate rose slightly to 3.8%, which remains among the lowest rates in recent history. Seasonally-adjusted employment fell by 3,100 jobs relative to the previous month, with losses spread across all industries. *

"Montana's employment level remained fairly steady this month, declining by only 0.7%," said Chief State Economist Brad Eldredge. "Our low unemployment rate should put upward pressure on workers' wages."

Manufacturing and Natural Resources and Mining both remained steady, with no change in employment over the month. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Information, and Business Services each experienced a decline of 100 positions relative to December. Leisure and Hospitality showed a loss of 200 jobs, while Financial Activities dropped by 300. Employment in Government declined by 400 from December to January, while Education and Health Services and Other Services both showed decreases of 600 positions. The largest over the month decline was seen in Construction, which experienced a decline of 700 positions. **

Additional information related to this employment situation press release can be found by visiting the Research and Analysis website at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

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** Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to Tyler Turner, Economist with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

***Beginning in 2006, the Research and Analysis Bureau will begin reporting over-the-month changes in seasonally adjusted employment data, rather than over-the-year changes in unadjusted data. This change will allow for easier comparison with national data, which is also reported using seasonally adjusted data. It will also allow for more timely detection of underlying economic trends, while filtering out normal seasonal movements in the data. Unadjusted employment data will remain available on our website.*

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

County unemployment rates are also available in our monthly economic bulletin, *Montana Economy at a Glance*, and on our website.

Employment information from the Bureau of Indian Affairs is available on the Department of Labor and Industry web page at:
dli.state.mt.us/resources/articles.asp

The February 2006 Labor Situation Report will be released Monday, March 20, 2006.